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THE SOUTH, THE NORTH, AND THE NATION
KEEPING SCHOOL.

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THE SOUTH, THE NORTH, AND THE NATION KEEPING SCHOOL.

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I SUPPOSE myself invited to address this assembly of eminent school men and friends of education, because of some unusual opportunities for observation of Southern affairs, as related to the rising school life of this portion of our country during the past three years. Without enlarging on the details of this interesting experience, or even quoting authorities for my conclusions, I will confine myself to a plain statement of some opinions that have been forced upon me through the entire period of my investigations, and which have now assumed, in my mind, the form of established convictions.

I shall speak of what has been done in the sixteen States, which include our former slave territory, since 1860; endeavor to show how this marvelous work has been accomplished, in the only way it could have been, by the combined effort of the South, the North, and the nation keeping school for the children; and, from this estimate of these several educational forces, and the prodigious work that still remains to be done, I shall try to outline the true method of success in the future.

If I were required to present to a European audience the most forcible illustration of the workings of republican institutions in our country, I should certainly select the history of the development of what we may call the new education in our Southern States, from the breaking out of the civil war in 1861 to the present date.

I speak of the *new education* in this connection. Up to 1860 the slave States had a system of education well adapted to perpetuate the dominant form of Southern society. It consisted of a reasonably thorough and extended system of collegiate, academical, and military schools for the sons of the superior class and such recruits from the lower orders of the white people as gave promise of unusual ability, with a large

development of the ordinary female seminary of a generation ago for the corresponding class of girls. A considerable number of the sons and daughters of wealthy people were also expensively educated by private tuition at home, attendance on Northern schools, or at institutions abroad. There was also a good deal of the sort of family and church instruction in political, religious, and social ideas that is always going on in a concentrated and aristocratic order of society. The result, as we all know, was the training of, perhaps, the most intelligent and forcible aristocratic class in Christendom, which displayed an energy in revolutionary politics and on the battle-field which, for four years, held the fate of the Union in suspense, and arrested the attention of the civilized world.

But, of course, in this scheme of education, all but two or three of the twelve millions of the Southern people were left with no systematic or persistent attempt at schooling.

The four millions of slaves were almost completely shut out from every sort of school; although American slavery, itself, was perhaps the most effective university through which any race of savages was ever introduced to civilization. In that severe training-school the African Negro learned to work, acquired the language of a civilized people, and took on at least some apprehension of the only religion that ever proposed to break every yoke and proclaim all men the children of God.

The several millions of non-slaveholding white people were not left entirely destitute. Many of the better sort were partially educated with their superiors. Almost every Southern State had a periodical experience of waking up to the importance of a system of common schooling for all white children. And especially in Virginia, the Carolinas, Kentucky, Alabama, and Louisi-

ana, this was attempted, though, outside a few cities, always with imperfect success. But the Southern non-slaveholding white people, outside the rim of "poor white trash," corresponding to our Northern tramp, had the schooling which comes from discipline implied by the settlement of a new country and the enjoyment of citizenship in a republican state. It was a training that brought the Southern masses up to the point of that astonishing military efficiency which, along a line of battle of a thousand miles, held this mighty Union at arm's length through four terrible years.

I linger over this picture of the old Southern education because ignorance of it has created many false notions of the educational problem among our Northern people. In 1861 the South was not that abode of mental imbecility and dismal ignorance which many an enthusiastic teacher going down there has imagined. On the contrary, it was a country where, perhaps, one fourth the people were thoroughly trained for leadership in the aristocratic form of society, and where the Negro and the poor white man had received a discipline in the university of American life which was the best possible preparation for the new era of education, through schools, teachers, and books, upon which the South entered the very year of the outbreak of the civil war.

History will record that never before was such a spectacle witnessed as the sudden waking up of Christian and patriotic zeal for the education of a people in a state of revolt against national power. It is true that the missionary of religion has often followed an army of subjugation to change the faith of nations of savages and barbarians. But, in our case, the Northern people displayed at once their immovable faith in the Union for which they were fighting, and their confidence and radical respect for their Southern brethren in revolt, by taking the school-house as the most prominent article in the baggage-train, and leaving the teacher to build up the waste places in the track of desolating war. The most thoughtful of our Northern people, from the first, believed that a good system of popular education of the Southern masses would have prevented the war and opened a way for the peaceful abolition of slavery. But, since that was not permitted, they believed that the only security for the restored Union would be that general enlightenment of both races which would bring the vast majority of the Southern people to a condition of intelligent citizenship. And, having no doubt of the success of the war, the same class "took time by the forelock," and within a year from the firing on Sumter had established the school for the "Contraband" along the Atlantic coast, from Washington to Beaufort, down the Mississippi, through the inland south-

west, and at the city of New Orleans. In short, the school master and mistress followed the army during the progress of the war; instructing thousands of the Negroes of every age; expending large sums contributed by the benevolence of the Christian people of the North; every-where supported by the military power and, to a considerable extent, aided indirectly by the government.

In 1862 the national government voted a magnificent donation of public lands for the establishment of agricultural and mechanical education in all the States. Anticipating the immense value of this donation to the South, the lands of these revolting States were religiously held in reserve against the time when they should be claimed in a restored Union. It is impossible to estimate the present and prospective value of this gift to the Southern people at their present crisis of agricultural, manufacturing, and mining industry.

In 1865 Congress took up this educational work, which had already outgrown the resources of private benevolence, and, through annual appropriations continued for six years, the gift of national property, and the diversion of confiscated lands, under the direction of the Freedmen's Bureau, gave an impetus to the work of Southern education, especially among the freedmen, which it has never lost. In the ten years, from 1860 to 1870, it is probable that not less than twenty millions of dollars were thus expended by the North and the nation for education in the South.

Meanwhile, the Peabody Educational Fund of two millions of dollars had been devoted to the building up of the public school through the entire South. And this magnificent benefaction has been followed by many large contributions, like those of the Vanderbilt family, Mr. Corcoran, Seney, and Slater, Mrs. Stone, and Mrs. Hemenway, with great numbers of others, which have poured a constant stream of helpful aid southward for the past fifteen years. Neither should it be forgotten that the great majority of Northern teachers who have wrought in this field have virtually made their work a "labor of love;" the compensation, even of presidents of colleges, being less than the wages of Northern mercantile book-keepers, and of the majority of subordinate teachers not above that of reliable servants in Northern cities.

For the last ten years, outside a few prominent institutions for the education of the white people, the great effort of the North has been made, through the mission organizations of the several Churches, toward the establishment of all grades of schools for the freedmen. When the history of the educational work in the South by the Christian people of the North is fairly written, it will be, in itself, the most conclusive answer to the whole impeachment of our modern

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Christianity by its enemies of every grade. The history of the world cannot produce a more affecting spectacle than the growth of this mighty Christian philanthropy which, beginning amid the din of battle, has steadily marched on, through all sorts of misunderstanding, neglect, opposition, and disparagement, with amazing patience, forbearance, and wisdom, to its present state. To-day, there are probably not less than a hundred important schools, twenty of them bearing the title of college, with ample buildings and excellent facilities for religious, mental, and industrial education, established for the Southern colored people, chiefly taught by Northern men and women; a body of instructors not inferior to any similar class in the country in general capacity for such a difficult work. In these schools not less than fifteen thousand of the superior young colored people are being prepared, not only as teachers and professional characters, but, what is more significant, trained for leadership of the six millions of American colored citizens. The whole problem of Negro citizenship is involved in the formation of a genuine leading class—an aristocracy of character, skilled industry, and intelligence that shall, at once, give direction to the millions of these people, and become their true representative in all dealings with the white people of the Republic.

And it is not too much to say that the colored people, the South, and the nation, will be indebted to the Christian schooling in these institutions for the beginning of this prodigious undertaking. Perhaps the most gratifying feature in this work is the fact that, at the end of fifteen years, it has conquered all vital opposition among the leading classes of the South. Half a dozen States now make annual appropriations to these collegiate schools. Southern gentlemen are included in their boards of management. The State of South Carolina, first in secession, has been the first to include a colored college in the organization of its State University. Many of the schools of lower grade are now being included in the new system of public schools. The graduates of the higher seminaries are in constant demand as teachers. In short, it seems as if, within a generation, all these great seminaries will become virtually Southern universities, largely controlled by the Southern people of both races, endowed by Northern munificence, the most splendid offering in behalf of "peace on earth and good-will to men" ever made, under similar circumstances, by the Christian Church, in any age and land.

Thus, within the past twenty years, the people of the North, in connection with the government of the United States, has shown its confidence, respect, and affection for the Southern people by a mighty work of educational beneficence, conducted on lines of

operation where it was hardly possible that the South could help itself, involving an outlay, probably, all things considered, of not less than fifty millions of dollars. And the point we wish to press is, that this has been done in the characteristic American republican way. The nation has not gone into these States to establish schools, antagonizing their people and paralyzing home effort, but has simply given twenty-five millions of property to aid in a good work, and established, in the Bureau of Education, one of the most potent agencies for inspiration, encouragement, and instruction possible under our form of government. The Northern Churches and people have not gone down South to build fortresses of propagandism. They have wisely adjusted their educational work to the condition of the freedman; trained him to pay money and labor for good schooling, and sent him forth, a superior person, for all the uses and duties of Southern citizenship. And, although I have no right to speak for any Church engaged in this great work, I believe, after careful observation, that nothing would be more satisfactory to the Northern Christian people than to see this splendid cluster of schools, with their investment of perhaps \$20,000,000, past and present, lapse gradually into the hands of the Southern people as a permanent gift to their new educational life.

But we shall greatly mistake if we suppose the most important work in Southern education, during the past fifteen years, has been this friendly demonstration from the North and the nation. No people can be educated permanently by another people. As far as concerns its educational life, every State of this Union is practically a separate people. Although much can be done, at certain critical periods, as in our new States of the West, by material aid and the inspiration of superior teachers and advanced methods introduced from abroad, yet each of those great States to-day has built up its own system of education, in some respects better than corresponding systems in older commonwealths. So must it be with the South in the building up of the vast enterprise of the new education. If these sixteen States, or those of them which were involved in the experiment of the Confederacy, had lain dormant through these fifteen years just outlined, or if they had wrought in an obstinate spirit of opposition to education, the prospect now would indeed be hopeless. For there is not power enough, under our system of government, in the nation, the Church, or the people of the North to force the American type of education even into Delaware against its will, to say nothing of the gigantic folly of attempting to school a region larger than Europe, with eighteen millions of people, at arm's length, across a hostile border-land, in the face of political, social, and ecclesiastical disagreement, inten-

sified by a race problem more complex than was ever presented to any civilized land. Thus we can only understand the real significance, and predict the outcome of what has already been done by the North and the nation in Southern education when we understand what has been going on through these sixteen States during the time already described.

How should we expect the home educational movement to begin in a country so prostrated, demoralized, and socially turned upside down as the South in 1865? And here I record my opinion that the Northern people have never realized and cannot understand the wide-spread ruin of every vital interest that fell upon the revolting States in 1865.

The Confederate resistance to the overwhelming power of the Union was like the heroic, almost preternatural, attempt of the inhabitants of a new Michigan village to fight off an all-consuming fire that is steadily advancing its awful circuit, only to close in with more fatal destruction at the end. No people in modern history had been left so thoroughly prostrate as every class in these revolting States at the close of the war. And in such wholesale overturn the school always goes first. In 1865 there were probably not a score of the old academies and colleges in these States in actual session. Many of their buildings were destroyed and all dilapidated; their endowments had vanished; their teachers were dead or scattered, and their patrons were at work driving the wolf from the home door, with no ability to send their growing children to any school, or to establish any thing to take the place of their former system. The effort of the provisional government to place the Northern scheme of free elementary education on the ground, continued in some States for ten years, deserved far more respect than it received and more success than it attained. The radical weakness of this movement was the attempt to establish an expensive system of popular education among a people who had never tried it, had not come to believe in it, were not able to pay for it, and, naturally, looked upon it as a hostile movement of the victorious party in the civil war. Yet the South to-day will agree with us that even this experiment had its uses, and left on the ground a large number of school-houses and a growing desire for popular education among the masses of both races which has been a powerful stimulant to the home effort of the past ten years.

But only an educational enthusiast will believe that a permanent educational movement can be inaugurated until the educated and responsible class is convinced of its importance, and prepared to take it up in a practical way.

And, just here the leading class of the Southern States displayed that wonderful common sense and "gumption" which is the rarest outcome of our republican order of human affairs. It is possible that a French populace of a century ago might have been fired up with a prodigious enthusiasm to undertake the schooling of the ignorant masses while the whole upper story of educational life was a hopeless wreck. Fortunately for our country, the superior class of Southern people began their new educational work in the plain common-sense way of first rebuilding the school by which their own children could alone be saved from a lapse into the barbarism of ignorance. The most pitiful spectacle on earth is the reverting of an educated people to ignorance; and that was the most imminent peril that faced the Southern school man in 1865. The three or four millions of superior and variously educated white people of the South in that year found themselves in hopeless poverty, scattered over an area as large as Europe, outside Russia; the vast majority sparsely distributed through an open country; their homes swarming with children and youth, and no established system of schools to give them that mental training which would be their only outfit in the struggle for success.

In this emergency it would have been unnatural if the people had proceeded in any other way than they did; to get on the ground, at least, a temporary arrangement for the education of their own children and those of their white neighbors more destitute than themselves. To this work they bent themselves with a singleness of purpose and a pertinacity thoroughly American and deserving of all praise. Whatever they may have thought of the great effort of the North and the nation in behalf of the Negro, they knew that it would be a questionable gain to give the crude elements of knowledge to the children of the freedmen if the offspring of the only educated class in the country was permitted to lapse into barbarism. I have studied carefully the progress of this prodigious effort of the upper strata of the Southern people, within the past fifteen years, to re-establish the upper side of education. We must remember that, in States where the vast majority of respectable people live in the open country, the establishment of even the secondary public school must be the work of years, and the first generation will be fortunate if it gets an effective elementary education fairly on the ground. For fifty years yet the academy in the country town and the college, as we now find it, will be the chief opportunity of all classes of white people for any thing beyond the mere elements of schooling, through at least a dozen of these great States. So, for the past fifteen years, these people have toiled,

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as nobody can know but themselves, through sacrifices almost incomprehensible to our wealthy Northern communities, to rehabilitate their little colleges and academies, and to furnish the small amount necessary to give their children such education as they might in these schools. I undertake to say that this effort alone entitles the South to the profound interest, even admiration, of all thoughtful school men every-where. The effort has been a most gratifying success. Leaving out the great drift of worthless and indifferent private schools that have sprung up with a mushroom growth, thirty-five of them, as I found, in one little city of five or six thousand white people, the academies and colleges that have been actually organized, newly founded, or put in working order, are now, perhaps, sufficiently numerous, if well endowed, to meet the present wants of the people. But to do this it has been necessary that the most eminent teachers should be overwhelmed with work and live on starvation wages; that great numbers of women of the highest social position, and the daughters of the leading families, should give their lives to the work of instruction; that families strangely impoverished should contrive to pinch themselves for the schooling of their young people; and that great numbers should still be dependent on the benevolence of neighbors and school corporations for what they obtained. It is impossible, of course, to say how much this great rehabilitation has cost the Southern people in money. Outside an occasional gift from the North, and two or three munificent endowments—like Vanderbilt, Tilden, and Emery—this money has been a home contribution, by a people just struggling up to comfortable living, in behalf of the secondary and higher education, always under Christian influences, and every-where reasonably progressive. To understand what this effort means, even to-day, is to suppose a State like Connecticut suddenly reduced to poverty; school funds and endowments swept away; with the ability, at best, to keep afloat a three or four months' district school for the masses; with an occasional graded school in the cities; and the upper third of its youth gathered in schools where the widows of its governors and judges and the daughters of its proudest old families are teaching, in overcrowded classes, at wages ranging from three to five hundred a year, with an occasional prize of a \$1,000 salary at the top; and the vast majority of its enterprising boys compelled to leave school at fourteen to "keep the pot boiling" at home. I know well enough the characteristic defects of this, the upper side of the New Education in the South, and appreciate the great advance that has been possible in Baltimore, Washington, and St. Louis, and now in New Orleans, through the gift

of several millions of dollars by Southern men like Hopkins, Pratt, Tulane, Coreoran, and the noble group of men who have founded the Washington University of St. Louis. But until I see how a Northern State would do better things for the children under similar circumstances, I must be pardoned for my unaffected admiration of this prodigious undertaking of the leading Southern people since the close of the great war.

But the Southern people have not paused with this attempt at the reconstruction of the secondary and higher education for the white race. Beyond this, of their own notion, in every State, within the past ten years, the people's elementary common school for white and colored children has been placed on the ground, defended through the dangers of its infancy, made better every year, until it has become a vital institution of Southern civilization. And when we consider that even England waited until within twenty years before she seriously undertook to be responsible for the education of the masses; and that all Europe, outside Germany and Switzerland, has been even more tardy in this respect; that the free public schooling even of white children was practically unknown in the South, on any large scale, previous to 1860, while all instruction was forbidden to the Negro; that the whole education and entire political, religious, and social training of the leading classes was opposed to the common school; that, in most instances, all public-school funds were sunk in the war, and all the money, save a few hundred thousand dollars yearly from the Peabody and other funds, must be taken from communities where there is every thing to be done and so little to do with; that in several States more than half the amount is given to the freedmen, while little comes back from their taxation; also the almost insurmountable difficulties of climate, and the condition of the open Southern country during half the year; this effort assumes a magnitude worthy of all respect. In every Southern State the establishment of the public school has been fought through in the face of every enemy that threatens its existence at the North. Wide-spread poverty has been the standing argument against taxation. Sectarian narrowness and clerical zeal, Catholic and Protestant, has raised the cry: "Godless," "secular," "immoral," "communistic." Social exclusiveness has turned the cold shoulder and, as Gen. Grant said to me at the White House, "there is too much reading and writing already to suit a good many statesmen in the Capitol." In certain districts, and perhaps in the State of Louisiana, to-day, this bitter conflict between the people and their adversaries still goes on. Yet it can be said that in every one of these sixteen States the battle

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for the people's common school, in its whole range of development, from the country district to the State university, has been won. Every Southern State, this year, is doing a little better for its children than last year. Say every thing that can truly be said in disparagement of the new public schools of the South: their establishment and support, to this date, is the most notable educational fact in Christendom within the past ten years. We must understand just how far this is a home work to appreciate its magnitude. The two or three hundred thousand dollars of annual appropriation, and the labors of the agents of the Peabody Fund, have been a great help. The training of colored teachers in the mission colleges, supported by the North, has been even a greater assistance, although partially kept up by the tuition paid by the colored people themselves. The influence of the Bureau of Education and its apostolic secretary, John Eaton, has been good and only good through all these years. The support of a superior system of public schools in Washington, partly at the expense of the general government, has furnished an excellent model for the whole South. But all these influences, together with the friendly encouragement of Northern teachers, have been but a small element in this vast undertaking of the organization of the Southern common school, which is even more truly the work of the Southern people, unaided from abroad, than the establishment of the Western public school has been the work of the people of the West.

For three years past my own time has been engrossed by travels, studies, and labors, largely bearing on the present condition of the public school in the Southern States. I have done a good deal of work in twelve of these States, and think I understand pretty well what is going on in all of them. Their schools range from two or three months, in Louisiana, to five months, in the country in Virginia, and in many localities the school goes on for a longer time by private contribution. In all the larger cities, and in many smaller towns, the graded school is established for both races, and, in many cases, handled with great ability, by the best methods, for eight or nine months of the year. In every State the County Institute for the training of teachers; in several the Summer Normal Institute of several weeks' duration, and in some the proper State Normal School for white and colored pupils are established. Outside a certain class of fossil and antiquated pedagogues, and the usual drift of incompetent youth working for pay, these schools are taught by the choice young people of both races. A better class of people, more earnest, more determined to improve, more self-denying, working on wages painfully and sometimes pitifully inadequate, cannot be found in any Christian land than the ma-

majority of the public-school teachers of the South. The State Superintendents of Education, and many of the city and county supervisors, are the same sort of people as our leading educators in the North. With occasional exceptions, I believe school funds are honestly and economically applied, and, in all but two States, divided with reasonable fairness among all the children. It is not possible to give the average colored child as good a school as the white child; because he cannot take it; but the colored public schools are every-where improving, and are hindered as much by the ignorance and jealousies of their own people as by any other cause. The charge that the Southern public schools, except in very occasional individual instances, are schools of disloyalty, I know to be untrue. The attempt to publish series of sectional or even Southern school-books has broken down, and the Northern educational "drummer" is on the heels of every school trustee and superior teacher from Delaware to Texas. Our Northern summer schools are crowded with these teachers, and thousands more would come if they had the money.

In short, the Southern common school is the American common school in all respects, save its bitter need of more money, longer sessions, and more thoroughly-trained teachers. It has already saved thousands of the children of respectable white people from ignorance and, for the first time, brought the lighted candle of knowledge to other thousands of homes where mental darkness brooded before. Its graduates are not the lazy and shiftless, but the superior, skilled working class in all their communities. And if any man, however eminent, honest, or Christian, declares that these schools are godless, immoral, or even unmoral, I must be pardoned for telling him that he does not know what he is talking about. If any body can look at the colored children and youth of Washington, graduates of the public schools, and contrast them with the awful crowd of untaught Negro humanity that swarmed the streets of any Southern city before the school-mistress came in; or will compare the white school-children of Atlanta, Richmond, and Savannah with communities where ignorance still prevails; and will then deliberately prefer this charge, I can only say his make-up is so different from my own that there is no common basis for an argument in the premises. And I would remind my objector, on this ground, of the fact that there is one plot of "holy ground" in every Southern community, where the whisky bottle, the smutch of tobacco, the pistol and knife, profane and obscene speech cannot enter, by common consent; and that spot is the school-house and lot, public even more than private and collegiate, established by the Southern people within the last fif-

teen years. Besides this, the whole subject of the superior and industrial education of the colored people is being debated in every Southern community. The State and the Church are both beginning to move on lines of advance. And in all Southern cities there is a hopeful movement for the æsthetic and the higher industrial training prophetic of valuable results in the near future.

Thus, while the North and the nation have been at work, chiefly on the lower side of this vast educational Southern problem, during the past twenty years, spending perhaps \$50,000,000, a large part of it for the elementary training of the colored people, and testifying their confidence, respect, and faith that the South will appreciate their work; this confidence, respect, and faith has not been misplaced. The Southern people have responded to this magnificent demonstration, not by flinging up the hat in applause so much as by taking off the coat and working, at the other end of the problem, as no other people ever wrought before. The result is that, during these memorable years, the Southern people have not only restored their secondary and higher education to a condition, in some respects better than before 1860, but have also established in every State the American system of public instruction, and committed themselves to its support, according to their ability, in every grade. It is impossible to estimate the money investment in this enterprise during all these years. Last year the South paid not less than \$15,000,000 for education, and this year the sum will be increased. At least as much money and far more labor has been given by the South, out of its poverty, than by the North and the nation, out of their abundance, for Southern education since the war. More than \$50,000,000, meaning to that people many hundred millions, judged by Northern standards, has thus been laid upon the altar of the children's hope.

And now the traveler through the Southland finds himself every-where in the presence of an educational revival as marked as in New England in the days of Horace Mann. And the blessedness of this revival is that it is bringing together the children and youth, their teachers, the younger parents, and the more thoughtful people of North and South, as no movement in the political, the ecclesiastical, or even the industrial sphere of national life can possibly succeed in doing. It is easy enough for stalwarts, sectarians, sectionalists, and soreheads of all descriptions to find food for denunciation and gloomy foreboding in Southern society; and our Northern municipal life, to say nothing of certain ugly tendencies in other regions of society, will still provoke the return fire of the diminishing Southern "old guard" that holds the fort against the

North and the nation. But the time has come when, in behalf of the children, all Christian men and women should call a halt in such recriminations, and hold counsel together in the interest of that education of the head, the heart, and the hand which can alone make us one. For twenty momentous years the American people, in sixteen Southern States, have been laying the foundations and raising the opposite walls of the massive temple of the New Education. While the North and the nation have been toiling, on the one side, "all orders and conditions" of Southern men and women have worked, according to their light, each on his own angle, but all on some section of the mighty building where the children shall be gathered in. That these workmen have sometimes mistaken the beat of rival hammers and the clink of rival chisels around the corner for a new tramp of hostile forces, is not surprising. But one thing will be not only surprising but disgraceful and disheartening beyond compare; if, when these rival workmen have really built up the walls and met each other around the dome that crowns their common work, they should fall out, fling their tools at each other, and fight over the miserable wrangle of precedence to the bitter end; while they should be clasping each other's hands and running up the old flag with prayers and songs of dedication and ringing shouts of joy as of a people whose most devious ways have been along providential paths; all ascending to the summit of a nation's hope and a new triumph for the human race.

But all that has been done, on the whole so well done, is only the overture to the mighty work of educating the whole people, to which the South is now waking up. Our Southern friends are fortunately gifted with a boundless faculty of hopefulness in all matters pertaining to their own future. It will be fortunate if a laudable satisfaction at their present achievements does not blind them to the fact that, after all, this prodigious co-operative effort of the past twenty years has barely placed on the ground the machinery for educating the coming generation, while the work to be done is so vast as to be almost appalling. Massachusetts began to educate her people two hundred and fifty years ago, and has stuck to it more persistently than any civilized people. Yet, today, there are nearly a hundred thousand people in Massachusetts unable to read and write. Only a practiced school man can estimate the terrible obstinacy of chronic ignorance; how it fights and runs away, and skulks and shirks to escape detection; and, when "brought to the book," goes through another dodge of masquerading through all the phases of sham knowledge; and how short a time is required for a generation to lose its grip and begin to revert to its old estate! The South will do well to turn a

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deaf ear to all educational flatterers and optimists for the next half century, and pay good heed to what its own wisest men and women are all the time telling it; that the enormous work of instructing its whole people, even in elementary knowledge and mental discipline, is only begun, and that it needs a redoubled effort at home, with all legitimate help from the North and the nation for a generation to come, to do the work which patriotism, Christianity, and a wise self-interest demand.

The first point to be aimed at is to get the children actually into school and extend the term of instruction, in the country districts, to at least six months in the year; while the city and village graded school should be sustained at least eight months. The Superintendent of Instruction for Kentucky reports that one third the children of that State are in no school, and great numbers of the public schools are thoroughly inefficient. It is doubtful if one half the children of North Carolina are receiving even three months of reliable schooling. Louisiana, Florida, and Arkansas are even worse off, and all the Gulf States but little better. Thousands of ignorant people are keeping their children out of school for the pittance obtained for their work, and vagrancy and absenteeism from the school-house in the open country greatly impair the value of the schools. Too many unbelievers are filling the country with the absurd cry that schooling makes the Negro lazy, and that the ignorant workman is only reliable. But the fact is, that, out of certain favored localities, chiefly in towns, the experiment of thorough, continuous, intelligent schooling has never yet been fairly tried on these dense masses of white and colored ignorance. A poor school, poorly attended, badly taught, neglected by the superior people of a community, is a hot-bed of many vices. When the South succeeds in getting her illiterate millions actually in range of the educational forces that make up the American system of education, it will realize that such training will treble its industrial power and lift up the whole basement story of its life into the life and warmth of modern times.

But two conditions are necessary for this achievement. The first is a resolute determination, in every Southern State, to strain every nerve to increase the amount of money appropriated for public schools. And especially to establish the habit of local taxation for education. At the most, \$100,000,000 may have been expended for every sort of education in these sixteen States since 1860. But the State of Massachusetts has expended nearly that sum during the same period. New York State spends \$100,000,000 in ten years. Cincinnati pays as much every year as the State of Georgia, and Boston more than any Southern State, with

perhaps two or three exceptions. Our new North-west, besides its vast landed endowment, imposes the State tax, and then often shoulders a local assessment beyond any portion of the country.

Second. If any thing has been proved in educational matters at home and abroad it is, first, that the Church never succeeded in educating a people; second, that the family has always failed more decidedly than the Church; third, that private enterprise never did more than educate a favored class; fourth, that in our country the common school, to be respectable, must be free to all; fifth, that neither the nation nor the State can be relied upon for any thing more than the most general supervision, encouragement, and partial support of the people's school; sixth, that no community succeeds in educating its children until it faces the hard fact of local taxation, and trains itself to the persistent and generous assessment of all its property for the common good. The most dangerous weakness of education through vast regions of the open Southern country is the fact that the people of both races do not understand this, and are looking to the State or to private benevolence and various other expedients to keep their schools alive. Another valuable result of this habit will be the training of the Southern people in that local self-government which has been so effective in the history of New England. Already this result has been marked in many localities. The present year, North Carolina has passed a valuable law, empowering school precincts to tax themselves, and the people of Texas have indorsed a constitutional amendment proposing the same thing.

Third. There must be a concerted effort, at the training of teachers suitable to handle the common school by improved methods. A great deal of the school keeping of all sorts in these States is inefficient and almost useless from the lack of teaching skill. Just now the South has the best material in the world for good teaching; for the superior class, of both sexes, among the colored people, and the superior young women of the white people, are thronging this profession. But even this will not save the school unless these young people can have, not only academical, but professional training. So far, the word normal school in the South is little more than a name for an academical grade of any sort. Even our universities and colleges for colored youth, with a few exceptions, have given no effective training in the art of teaching to their pupils. The Southern people need skill in the school-room, especially on account of the absence of many outside helps to the average child. The Peabody Fund has struck the key-note in giving nearly all its income for the training of teachers in its own school at Nashville,

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in Sumner Institute, and paying the salaries of skilled superintendents. The Slater Fund should give no money to any institution, for training teachers, except on condition of a thorough normal department under an expert, with a practice school annex. Every Southern State should make haste in some effective way to push on the training of teachers, and every Southern academy and college should establish a department for the same purpose. It is in the schooling of such masses of children as are now brought into their classes that skill is especially required, and it is not a moment too soon to begin the gigantic work which half our Northern States have not yet compassed, but which every wise school man everywhere knows to be a prime condition of success.

Fourth. There is a great field for industrial education in the South, while there is danger that, in handling this complex matter, great and fatal mistakes may be made. There are two specious un-American notions now masquerading under the taking phrase "Industrial Education." First, that it is possible or desirable to train large bodies of youth to superior industrial skill without a basis of sound elementary education. You cannot polish a brickbat, and you cannot make a good workman of a plantation Negro or a white ignoramus until you first wake up his mind and give him the mental discipline and knowledge which comes from a good school. The first thing that the illiterate classes need every-where in our country for their permanent industrial elevation is six months of thorough elementary training in schools handled by good teachers, for five or six years of their life, and only a generation so taught can ever learn to work in connection with the labor-saving agencies which are revolutionizing every sphere of human industry. Second, that it is possible or desirable to train masses of American children on the European idea that the child will follow the calling of his father. Class education has no place in our order of society, and the American people will never accept it in any form. The industrial training needed in the South must be obtained by the establishment of special schools of improved housekeeping and the various styles of artisan work that its new manufactures will open for girls, with mechanical training for such boys as desire it, and a general improvement of agriculture through local associations of farmers and their wives. This will open into larger provisions for the higher form of technical schools. And this training should be given impartially to both races, without regard to the thousand and one theories of what the colored man cannot do. But any attempt to recast the public school into a semi-industrial institution, in my opinion, will fail of both the ends pro-

posed in the present state of Southern education.

Fifth. The time has come to call a halt in the establishment of new academies and colleges for both races until those on the ground are better endowed and made more effective. The educational scourge of these States now is the great army of broken-down people who are forcing themselves on the public as teachers of private and semi-parochial schools, with no real qualification for the office of instructor. In more communities than is known this wasteful practice deprives the people of any thing like thorough education, and fills the community with children and youth wretchedly prepared for the duties of life. There are now good secondary and collegiate schools in the South, enough to educate the people, if the people will give them fair support, and their communities will work persistently for their endowment. And with this should go on a general movement for the establishment of free libraries in every community. It will be a questionable advantage to teach a million Southern children to read if they turn to the dime-novel, the lower side of the press, or the horrible trash with which every railroad is flooding the country. Every school-house and church should have its children's library, and every community its collection of books suitable for general reading open to all.

Sixth. The Southern people will do well to give every child the great American chance of a fair elementary education, and see how he will turn out. That is the only national, scientific, practical, or Christian way to educate a people. The opposite way is to predict, in advance, what any set of children cannot do, and then see to it that they have no chance given them to do it. And, just here, if my words could reach every school district in the South-land, I would say: Give no heed to this noisy crowd of Northern educational cranks who are now filling the press with their preposterous, false, and silly denunciations of the American system of public schools. The American public school has great defects, like every thing else, public or private, in the country. But its defects are only those common to every American institution, and it is to be judged, like the American family, business, politics, society, literature, and the Church, by understanding its better features, marking its direction, and observing its spirit of progress. Judged in this way, our American education, of all grades, in the North, is fully abreast of any thing in the country, and is, perhaps, on the whole, more thoroughly alive to its own defects, and more earnestly striving for improvement than any other region of our national life. So I would say to our Southern friends—when Richard Grant White and Gail Hamilton denounce the common school

as a failure all round; when ultra scientific experts ridicule it as superficial and misleading; when Bishop McQuaid declares it godless, immoral, and communistic; when Dr. Nathan Allen tells you that New England manhood and womanhood are physically going "out the little end of the horn;" when Zachary Montgomery and the crowd of journalistic scribblers declare that the schools are the nursery of laziness; when international novelists and literary lights sneer at our popular education as a nursery of vulgarity; when venerable college presidents and academical principals publish the high school and the normal school a failure—it will be perfectly safe to turn a deaf ear, and to go on building up every sort of good school in the South that now exists in the North; for, while cranks die and go to their own places, good schools abide.

And out of this review of the educational outlook in the South comes to my mind the unanswerable argument for a wise, generous, and immediate policy of national aid for the people especially of a dozen of these States, against the appalling illiteracy which is the one great bar to their prosperity. In my view, this aid should be immediate and generous; graduated with the sole view to stimulate the energies of the people; kept sharply outside sectarian, religious, and partisan politics; left to the State authorities for administration—of course, under all proper safeguards; and supplemented by judicious continuation of private and Christian beneficence from the North, with a universal effort to make it the occasion of a great revival of kindly feeling through all sections. I believe the time has come when all this can be achieved; but better wait longer than have any imperfect, partisan, or partial attempt that will fail and leave misunderstanding and new jealousy in its wake.

Several results of such an act of eminent statesmanship I am confident would be assured.

First. The obstructive class in every community whose greatest leverage now is in the acknowledged defects of the schools, would become a feeble minority as soon as public education took on the form of respectability and efficiency, which such aid would assure.

Second. It would enable thousands of bright young people to obtain the elementary education at home which would fit them for a successful term in the secondary or collegiate school, and lay the foundation of professional success. Now the Southern academies and colleges are clogged with multitudes of students who have grown up with no elementary education, and are, therefore, unable even to use the opportunities obtained by so much sacrifice and toil. A considerable per cent. of national aid should be given for the training of

teachers by the most practical methods that can be devised by the school authorities of these States.

Third. It will be a mighty encouragement and stimulant to local effort. Hang up a sum of money, to be obtained by any community on the sole condition that it strains every nerve of home resource, and every public-spirited man, every anxious mother, and every aspiring and eager youth besets that community to do its best. There are thousands of neighborhoods in the open Southern country, and hundreds of little villages and settlements, where such an offer would stimulate the people and, for the first time, bring them together in a hearty movement for the common education of their children.

Such aid, continued for a reasonable time, would root the people's common school in all except peculiar communities, and educate their inhabitants to its permanent support. I have never heard of a community which has enjoyed a good common school for a term of years giving it up for any cause but such as would destroy every public institution. The reason is, that a good public school is the most potent stimulus to every other good institution. While, in itself, it is a powerful agency for mental growth and intelligence, a potent disciplinarian in the common moralities, a nursery of industry and patriotism, it is, all the time, stirring up the family and the Church to new efforts, and, in a variety of open and secret ways, refreshing the social, industrial, and civic life of the people. The American people know a good thing when they have it, and the Southern people can be trusted to take good care of the school thus rooted and confirmed by national aid.

I leave to others the large and important sphere of argumentation that enforces this imperative duty on the ground of justice, political policy, Christian philanthropy, or defense against impending national calamities, more threatening, even, than any peril of the past. And I must be excused for taking but little stock in the gloomy predictions and dismal apprehensions of many good people in all sections of the country in regard to Southern and national affairs. I do not think I have been deceived in my widely extended observations of the Southern educational situation, or have been blinded by the uniform kindness of these people to the difficulties still to be overcome. I can understand that even wise men, viewing Southern life from a local and limited angle of observation, can differ widely from me in their estimate; or, even, that eminent educators and social philosophers may be oppressed by anxious doubts concerning the outcome of American society as a whole. But, looking at this Republic along the line of historical perspective, it seems to me that,

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for the past hundred years, our new country has been maneuvering for position among the nations of the earth, and that now it stands before the world in an attitude more hopeful, with greater possibilities for a Christian nationality, than any people in Christendom. I cannot discover any defect or danger in any section which will not yield to a true education of the head, the heart, and the hand, continued through a few decades, supported by the abundant means, pushed by the united executive capacity, and sanctified by the Christian spirit of our people. And, because I believe in this; believe in the pos-

sibilities of human nature; believe in the outcome of our American way of dealing with man; believe that the Southern people, even in its most illiterate regions, is at heart thoroughly American; believe that all foreign, obstructive, and un-American classes will either be finally absorbed or cast out from American society; believe that the vision of the fathers will be realized in the glory of the children, I have given my life to this glorious "ministry of education," and have come here to bear my own humble testimony in the great enterprise in which you are embarked to-day.

